



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://latchildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, February 22, 2016

10:00 AM

AUDIO FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (16-1105)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Commissioner Genevra Berger, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner John Kim, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Commissioner Janet Teague, Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey, Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith and Chair Sunny Kang

Absent: Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order. (16-0207)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kang at 10:03 a.m.

2. Introduction of the meeting attendees. (16-0212)

Self-introductions were made.

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of February 8, 2016. (16-0213)

On motion of Vice Chair Smith, seconded by Commissioner Brenes (Commissioners Cooper, Kamlager, Kim and Konigar-Macklin being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORT

4. Chair's Report. (16-0214)

Chair Kang reported the following:

- **Recognized and thanked Commissioner Brenes for joining the Educational Coordinating Council, which allowed Commissioner Seipel to step aside;**
- **Chair Kang will represent the Commission on the Children's Trust Fund Oversight Committee;**
- **There will be a CSEC 101 training held in Norwalk on March 22, 2016, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.;**
- **Today's regular meeting will be shortened due to the rescheduling of a presenter; and**
- **The Executive Committee will meet right after the Regular Commission for Children and Families' meeting is adjourned.**

5. Executive Director's Update. (16-0216)

There was no update from the Executive Director.

Commissioners Garen and McCroskey presented an updated on behalf of the Legislative Committee.

Commissioner Garen reported the following:

- **The Board of Supervisors and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) prioritized the issue of access to subsidize childcare for kin care and unrelated families;**
- **Last year there was an attempt to solve the problem, now there is a new legislative attempt to create a statewide fund of \$27 million; \$22 million will be allocated for childcare payments and remaining will be used for a navigator to help foster parents find suitable childcare and training for childcare providers on trauma informed care;**
- **There appears to be no opposition and the legislation will be submitted through a budget process;**
- **Leadership in this effort is being provided by Genie Chough, Children's Deputy of the Third Supervisorial District;**

- There are endorsements for this effort. The County supports it, the Chamber of Commerce, the alternative payment agencies, etc.
- The Committee will be asking the Commission at the next meeting to vote for endorsement.

Commissioner McCroskey reported the following:

- An initial hearing at the State level is expected in the beginning of April;
- Letters of support are more effective if received before the hearing. A letter of support from the Intergovernmental Relations Office has gone to the Assembly and the Senate;
- Multiple constituents from the child welfare side and early education side need to come together and say we have agreement on a new source of funding to bridge childcare;

Commissioner Garen further reported the following:

- The current idea is a six-month transitional voucher with the goal of moving families into longer term subsidized care.
- A pilot supported by a public-private partnership is also underway. DCFS will provide child care subsidy dollars to the Child Care Resource Center for dedicated emergency slots in family day care centers in the Antelope and San Fernando Valley. It also includes training for providers.

III. DISCUSSION

6. Reflections on the Annual Retreat. (16-0217)

Commissioner Seipel expressed her appreciation in the preparation for the Annual Retreat. She appreciated the one-on-one conversation with the consultant and the outcome of it, as well as the fact that they were able to finance a facilitator for the Retreat.

Chair Kang was grateful for having a facilitator and noted that it made a

huge difference.

Commissioner Brenes also expressed her appreciation and stated that she was able to learn the depth and accomplishments of the Commission. Commissioner Brenes questioned how the Commission will operationalize, stating that there needs to be a connection between the focus and working together; should be hand-in-hand.

Chair Kang stated that the Commission was in agreement with important issues that the Commission needs to devote themselves to areas where they can make a difference.

Chair Kang stated that the Executive Committee will meet to discuss meeting redesign, committee structure and how the Commission should move forward. Recommendations will be made to the Commission as a whole.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

7. Office of Child Protection - Judge Michael Nash. (16-0215)

Judge Michael Nash, Executive Director of the Office of Child Protection (OCP), provided an overview of the current status of OCP. Judge Nash reported that the OCP currently does not have dedicated work space; he is located in Room 383 and three additional staff are located throughout the Hall of Administration. Staff consists of Carrie Miller, who is serving as Assistant Director, Stefanie Gluckman, who is responsible for managing the Education Coordinating Council and Karen Herberts, who serves as Project Manager. OCP is in the process of hiring staff to work in the Philanthropy Center, as one of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (BRCCP) recommendations was to have an office within OCP that will serve as a liaison with the philanthropy community.

As pursuant to a Board Motion, Khush Cooper, a consultant, was brought onboard to address Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) issues. She will be working with multiple county departments to understand their policies, procedures, trainings, and practices with respect to LGBTQ issues.

Judge Nash identified four tasks that the OCP will perform:

- 1. Advise and take directions from the Board on issues related to child protection and report to the Board on actions taken or intended by OCP;**

2. **Work collaboratively with county agencies and other entities to identify issues impacting child protection and safety of Los Angeles County and develop strategies to improve the system to better serve children and families;**
3. **Work with relevant entities to implement recommendations from BRCCP; and**
4. **Work on other issues impacting child protection raised by the Board and other issues with the Board's approval. Judge Nash will draw from his experience to identify other issues to be addressed with the Board's approval.**

OCP Strategic Plan:

- **Under Judge Nash's leadership, OCP has developed a strategic plan which includes elements from the strategic plan developed by OCP's former Interim Director. The draft strategic plan is in the process of being shared with the Board. Judge Nash has already met with two Supervisors and their deputies. Once input from the Board and agencies heads are received, Judge Nash will share it with others and the Commission for further input. A finalized version of the strategic plan is to be completed in a couple of months. This will be the road map for OCP. The Strategic Plan is broken into focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Child Well Being and Cross Cutting Strategy;**

Prevention:

- **The work previously started on prevention is continuing. The prevention plan involves making sure there is an array of services available within the communities designed to prevent people from coming into contact with the child welfare and child protection system and to ensure that those services are made available for those that do come into contact with the system, to prevent further penetration into the system of those families.**

Public Health Nurses:

- **The BRCCP recommended that public health nurses are paired with social workers on investigations of child abuse or neglect. There is a pilot project underway that OCP will be reporting on in a few months.**

Public health nurses need to be looked at globally regarding how they are used in the County and how they can most effectively be used with respect to children in the system.

Psychotropic Medication:

- **AB319 authorizes the use of public health nurses to help monitor psychotropic medication. A couple of counties are utilizing public health nurses for that process. Psychotropic medication needs to be look at how it's used in the County. OCP began to focused on psychotropic medications last year. The plan that had been developed is on hold because other issues with respect to psychotropic medication need to be included.**

Data Sharing:

- **Per Judge Nash, the most important thing to remember is why the BRCCP and OCP were established. Due to the good work of Carrie Miller and the County Counsel, county agencies agreed to share information in ways that have never been done before. We are hoping to develop a technology that will aid in the sharing of information in the agreement that was crafted. OCP will continue to pursue.**
- **The BRCCP was created in response to another tragic death of a child that has been touched by one or more entities in our child protection network. The BRCCP report envisioned an Office of Child Protection with broad and significant power. OCP was created by the Board as a facilitator of what needs to be done under the authority of the Board.**

Essence of OCP:

- **Focus on working with all key players to develop a structure that will reduce the risk of a child touched by one more entities in Los Angeles County being seriously injured or ends up like Gabriel Fernandez.**
 - o **Look at how risk is assessed in the County and the different players involved in this process; look at DCFS and other agencies such as Law Enforcement, the Education System, Probation Department (PD), Department of Public and Social Services and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and their part of the process and how it's being managed; how the agencies are communicating and coordinating with each other on their part of the process.**

- o Once the structure is in place, the hopefully OCP can have a system that will reduce the risk of the conditions that lead to BRCCP and beyond.

OCP will have a strong role in implementation:

- OCP will look at what kind of training and cross training is necessary the resource needed to do the work. OCP will need to set up process to monitor how all this is working.
 - o The BRCCP report stated that a State of Emergency exists in the County and we need to be concerned with the safety of children. It also stated that many key entities in the system work in silos. By bringing everyone together to work on this issue, it will protect the children and lay a foundation for everything that OCP wants to do;
 - o In previous experience as a Presiding Judge in the Juvenile Court, Judge Nash was focused on enhancing communication, cooperation, coordination among the entities that effect children and families that the Court works with. In his first year, he had invited the directors of DCFS, DMH and the Chief of PD to a meeting. All agreed to meet together to develop and implement a protocol for dealing with cross-over kids in the County, which was implemented in October 1997. The protocol continues today and shows that entities can work together and trust each other. During his remaining time at the Court, everything the Court did was a result of collaboration between the Court and everyone they were involved with. Judge Nash hopes that the essence of OCP will have the same impact.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Judge Nash conveyed that the Child Protection system does not work without the involvement of the Court and vice versa. Although the Court is its own governing entity, it is a major piece of the Child Protection system in the County. Judge Nash has already set up regular communication with the Court and the Court is mentioned throughout OCP's Strategic Plan.

In regards to changes that involve finances, OCP would ideally connect with relevant agencies to look at the issue and look at how it can be resolved. If funding is a barrier, then OCP will look at those that are funders and hope that they will help support the efforts.

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding oversight of children going in and out of the County's shelters, including the Welcome Centers, Judge Nash referenced the Court's former oversight plan of the children placed in MacLaren Children's Center (MCC). Judge Nash has questions regarding the services available for kids entering the various shelters. The number of kids in care is increasing. When a child entered MCC, the Court was immediately notified. Following the notification, the Court would set a "15 day review" where DCFS was required to report back to the court on how the child is doing and what efforts were made to place the child, in an appropriate placement. Judge Nash stated that there needs to be a similar process in place for children, whether new or existing in the system, going through the Welcome Centers, a 72 hour placement facility, or a 30 day shelter. The role of the Court is to oversee the function of the system and agencies to see if it's serving children and families the way it was intended to.

Judge Nash added that the Court has to assert its oversight authority. By doing so, it will ensure that children remain in the various shelters only as long as they need to be and it will keep the pressure on agencies to replace children to appropriate placements as quickly as possible. Also, if reports are provided to the Court, there will be a real data base to see exactly what is happening and speed up the process for change. Judge Nash drafted a process for the Court to consider and will share what he sent with the Commission. Judge Nash urged the Commission to contact the Court to advocate for implementation of this process.

Judge Nash referenced the Welcome Centers Report and noted there are long and short term issues regarding placement resources. There is a shortage of foster homes. He noted the process of bringing in foster parents must be streamlined and improved.

Judge Nash also reported the following:

- Family Finding/ Relative Care:
 - o About 52 percent of foster children are with relatives, this percentage has not changed dramatically over the years;
 - o Spoke with Marc Cherna, Director of Health and Human Services in Allegheny County of Pennsylvania, who reported that 70 percent of their foster children are with relatives;
 - o We must have a philosophical and practical commitment to working with families and placing children with their own families;

- o All front end workers need training in using family find technology consistently;
- o DCFS should be using family finding for every case;

In response questions posed by the Commission regarding family finding, Diana Iglesias, DCFS, stated P3 workers had been deployed to the regions to work in this area and there is talk of redeploying them to do more front end work. There is a Board Letter before the Board regarding relative supportive services and relative home assessment contracts which will have outside agencies help DCFS support relatives. Judge Nash stated family finding in Los Angeles County through a cold case program and morphed into the P3 program. There was a program piloted in 2007 between DCFS and the Court in which family finding was used at the front end. The program was evaluated by DCFS, and found to be successful. There was some talk of implementing the program Countywide. Judge Nash conveyed that if there is a philosophical and practical commitment to locating, identifying, and supporting families, it can be done.

The Commission can support OCP by providing help. OCP needs input and welcomes questions and suggestions. Additionally, OCP will keep the Commission informed. The Commission expressed its interest in seeing BRCCP's recommendations implemented and stated that there are potentially 15 Commissioners that can provide help. OCP and the Commission can collaborate to figure out how the Commission can be an added value. OCP agreed to attend the Commission meeting quarterly to provide updates.

In response questions posed by the Commission, Judge Nash confirmed that the Court is there to provide independent judgement and make decisions on relevant issues. The system was designed for checks and balances to any extent that DCFS or other parties disagree with the decisions made by the Court.

Commissioner Kim requested DCFS report at the next meeting on the utility of the family finding technology; to what extent it is being used.

Member of the public, Sue Abrams of the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles (CLC), stated that they support the idea of the Court having oversight of children placed in shelters. CLC is co-sponsoring several bills this year with Alliance for Children's Rights to support relative placement and family finding at the beginning of the case.

The Commission thanked Judge Nash for his time.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

8. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (16-0218)

There were no matters presented.

9. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on item(s) of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (16-0219)

No members of the public addressed the Commission on other items.

10. Adjournment. (16-0220)

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.